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New Reports on Philby Spy Case of '63 Vex Britain

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LONDON, Oct. 7—The case of the "third man"—diverting as a theme for fiction by Graham Greene but vexing and disquieting when it is real—has been reopened by Britain's Sunday press.

The "third man" is Harold Adrian Russell (Kim) Philby, an Englishman who was a spy for the Soviet Union while serving sometimes as a journalist but more often as a counter-intelligence expert for Britain's MI6, key department of the British Secret Service.

The London newspapers have disclosed that his duties included countering Soviet espionage, commanding British intelligence operations in Turkey and serving as a liaison with the Central Intelligence Agency in Washington, with access to American secret information.

With such disclosures as these, The Sunday Times and The Observer have shaken this capital. Perhaps most unnerving of all their disclosures is that Philby managed to carry on his career for 30 years, until the beginning of 1963, when he defected to the Soviet Union.

Followed More Precautions

His defection came long after British security precautions were supposed to have been strengthened—in part to insure that there would be no repetition of the 1951 Burgess-Maclean affair.

The "third man" label was attached to Philby after it became known that he had enabled the late Guy Burgess and Donald Maclean, then serving as British diplomats in Washington, to escape to Moscow before they could be arrested on espionage charges.

The articles in the two Sunday papers contended that as head of the MI-6 section seeking to counter Soviet espionage, Philby had to have access to all of Britain's secret information about the Soviet Union and similar access to the equivalent American intelligence.

If so, he was much more important than has hitherto been realized.

Alarmed and embarrassed, the British Government must expect that the press will now delve into the workings of British intelligence. Three weeks ago, with each of the Sunday newspapers engaged in a war of nerves and each chafing to start its series of articles first, the Government issued a notice to all newspapers, consolidating all previous notices about publication of information about British intelligence and counter-intelligence.

Known as a "D notice" this document amounted to a warning to the press that prosecution might result from the publication of names of intelligence officials or information about the organization of intelligence.

Officially, Government departments are saying nothing about the Philby stories. Privately, officials comment wryly on the unhappy fact that British journalistic enterprise should serve the Soviet Union's interest in denigrating British intelligence with new disclosures about the handsome, quiet-spoken Philby.

After he left the Foreign Service in 1955, rumors and open charges were met by official denials, then by a Labor-Conservative coalition of silence. Finally in the summer of 1963 Philby was identified by the Government as a Soviet agent.

Born in 1912 in India

Philby was born in Ambala, India, on New Year's Day in 1912. His father, Harry St. John Philby, was at various times an author, desert explorer, Arab scholar, Moslem convert, friend of T. E. Lawrence of Arabia, adviser to King Ibn Saud, and official in the civil service in India.

Young Philby had a brilliant record at Westminster School and at Trinity College, Cambridge, where he first showed an interest in Communism.

"I have always been on the left," he once said, "but I have never been a Communist although I have known people who were Communists at Cambridge and for years afterward."

The two Sunday papers differ on the date and site of his recruitment by Soviet intelligence, but both agree that it was in the early nineteen-thirties and that Philby's assignment was to penetrate British intelligence.

His qualifications as a journalist, established during the Spanish Civil War, led to his employment in British intelligence.

Harold Evans, editor of The Sunday Times, feels strongly that the Philby disclosures will make many people "wonder just what kind of social and administrative structure led up to this fantastic infiltration." He believes it will make clear a need for reforms in many spheres.

But David Astor, owner and editor of The Sunday Observer, laughs off the social significance of the story. "As I see it, there is no social meaning in it," he said. "Philby could have deceived anybody. The Russians, like us, recruit their agents among the socially satisfied segments of their society. It is silly to blame the 'old boy network.'"

The "old boy network" is a reference to the tribal confidence and mutual backscratching said to exist among the graduates of exclusive, class-oriented British private schools that have traditionally supplied a large percentage of British public servants.

The significance of the Philby disclosures that is worrying many Britons was expressed by this week's Spectator magazine. It said: "While there are master minds and active bodies like Philby and Blake at work in Moscow, we had better watch out. If they have not actually left some time bombs behind they are considering how to get them into position now."

George Blake is another British spy, who last October escaped from Wormwood Scrubs prison where he was serving a 42-year sentence.

In the same week that The Sunday Times was publishing a picture of Philby in Red Square, other newspapers were publishing pictures of Blake swimming in a Caucasian lake.